

Arlington Town Meeting — Amendment Motion ARTICLE NO. 37, April 29, 2023

I, Mark Kaepplein (TMM P9), do hereby submit the following Motion to Amend Article 37:

I make the following amendment to the Town of Arlington MA Health & Human Services (section 24) and Inspections (section 21), budgets:

Reduce section Health and Human Services(24) appropriation funding by \$184,624, amending the TAXATION TOTAL from \$1,634,124 to \$1,568,162. Increase Inspections (21) funding by \$95,962, of which \$65,962 is ARPA funding, amending the TAXATION TOTAL from \$527,082 to \$557,082. The rest of the reduction from Health and Human Services(24), \$88,662, is unallocated.

Comment:

My math for the above numbers is: Moving ARPA funding(\$65,962) for a Town employee to Inspections, section 21. Moving \$30,000 of expenses funding to Inspections (21). Moving \$88,662 for Div. Eq. & Inc. Director position to unallocated spending.

I suggest the following uses of extra resources by the Inspections department: Audit the building permit database going back 10 years searching for unusually low fees and missing permits for work stated in real estate for sale listings, seek to correct missing information with tax assessor property cards, and assist in any possible claw-back of fees and taxes due the town. I also suggest funds be used to hire an inspector to reduce the time needed to service inspection requests.

Property tax increases force out lower income residents, reducing diversity, while expanding city-like services. Town and school employees look more like its residents than elsewhere, with the exception of gender inequality in primary schools – too few male teachers, depriving boys of male teachers as role models.

The Fincom handbook advises members not to "micromanage" budget items to reduce spending (p. 17) and no committee is working on reducing budgets to avert another property tax override,

Cities have commercial property tax rates and revenue while Arlington is a town without commercial property tax rates trying to take on city problems and services. DEI is just one of those city services. Massachusetts has survived 400 years of immigration without Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) departments and will surely survive without them now. Many corporations are laying off their DEI departments as a less needed expense

and expired fad with unrealized benefits.

There are few tangible benefits to residents from the DEI department excluding ADA coordination, and the Arlington DEI budget received the most “no” votes in the finance committee of any department.

Arlington's Inspectional Service department generates revenue to the town while DEI does not and only produces expenses such as \$100,000 for an equity study and a junket to the national NAACP conference.

The former director of Inspectional Services, Michael Byrne, reporting to the previous town manager, is alleged to have violated ethics rules for years, resulting in lost revenue to the town. <https://www.mass.gov/news/state-ethics-commissions-enforcement-division-alleges-former-arlington-inspectional-services-director-michael-byrne-violated-conflict-of-interest-law>. The new director has much work to do in healing the department and its reputation.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Mark H. Kaepplein

Mark Kaepplein, Precinct 9

Date Voted: _____

Action Taken: _____